# Point of View

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A small chill has invaded the China afterglow at the White House. A tiny shadow has fallen across the triumph of the world statesman.

President Nixon returned to the executive mansion to find which is analyzing the broth. memo attributed to a lady lobbyist for ITT. It seems for the moment to have diverted attention from the communique the President stayed up all night to compose in Peking.

Its fateful, prophetic last line: "Please destroy this, huh?"

The instruction was not followed, and the administration is awash in chagrin. People have stopped talking about what Richard Nixon said to Mao Tse-tung during "the week that changed the world." They're wondering instead what John Mitchell, the former attorney general, said to Mrs. Dita Beard at a Kentucky Derby reception last May.

### Pandas Upstaged

Chou En-lai's present of two pandas, enchanting though it is, cannot compete with ITT's alleged offer of $400,000 to the Republican National Convention while three antitrust suits were pending against it.

People who don't pretend to understand the intricacies of summit diplomacy or the inner workings of conglomerates have less trouble perceiving the "linkage" between settlement and present — particularly with the help of Mrs. Beard's memo, which, while cautioning discretion in every line, calls the proposed donation our "noble commitment."

On his first day back from a rest in Florida, the President had the experience of seeing the country's attention directed to a Hungarian heart specialist, Dr. Victor Liszka, Mrs. Beard's attendant physician, testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is analying the broth.

Mrs. Beard's disappearance last week occasioned unspeakable embarrassment to both the Department of Justice and the ITT, both of which must have wondered whether her absence or her presence would be worse.

### Both Join Search

The FBI and ITT joined in the search for her. ITT, one can only assume from the view of its imperial vastness revealed at the hearings, probably has its own FBI and, for all we know, a Pentagon and a small fleet.

The FBI, knowing the discomforture Mrs. Beard could occasion for both past and future attorneys general, got there first — Mrs. Beard was discovered in a Denver Hospital.

But in absentia, Mrs. Beard took what has become the standard route of the principals involved. Dr. Liszka told the committee that "She didn't mean to imply things that she seemed to imply in that memo."

To be fair, it should be said that her memo should not be taken as a literal statement of what occurred, but more in the manner of an after-action report from Vietnam. In both forms, the writer, anxious for the favor of superiors, may occasionally inflate a body count. Like the field commander who stretches things a bit in the hope of promotion, the lobbyist is proven to pile up big names in the hope of a raise. Mrs. Beard's bag is rather dazzling. She mentions the President, the attorney general, White House aide H. R. Haldeman, the lieutenant governor of California and Calif. Rep. Bob Wilson.

Columnist Jack Anderson, who published the memo, says it's proof positive of a payoff.

By taking it all back, Mrs. Beard is dollowing in the footsteps of those who have gone before her.

Atty. Gen.-designate Richard Kleindienst, whose confirmation was the issue at first, wrote in a letter last December to Democratic National Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien that the ITT antitrust matter had been handled and negotiated "exclusively" by Richard McLaren, the former chief of the antitrust division.

But under oath at the Senate hearings, Kleindienst remembered that he had had five meetings with ITT director Felix Rehatyn to hear about the "ripple effects" of the settlement proposed by McLaren. Kleindienst's erstwhile chief, former Atty. Gen. Mitchell,, now the President's campaign manager, said loftily, as if the suggestion were preposterous, that he didn't know "the faintest thing about the convention financing." He was promptly contradicted from California by Lt. Gov. Ed Reinecke, who said he had told Mitchell about the $400,000 last May.

### Recollection Refreshed

By sundown, his recollection refreshed, Reniecke contradicted himself and said that he had told Mitchell the good news in September, not May.

The most bizarre aspect of the whole affair is that the settlement could well have been on the up-and-up. And a contribution by a huge financial empire to the Republican party is not really in itself shocking. The difficulty is that people say different things at different times about the part they played in the arrangement.

It must be galling for the world-changer in the White House. And Chou En-lai, who has been so helpful about his re-election in so many ways, can't help now — unless of course, he could arrange a trip to China for all concerned.